

THE CEA CRITIC

Vol. XXIII, No. 6

Published at Livingston, N. J.

Editorial Office, Upsala College, East Orange, N. J.

September, 1961

Behind the Word

I was rather amused by the way in which *Variety* Magazine of September 14, 1960, punned on the word *tenderloin* as it is used for the name of a play and for a certain strip of tender and choice beef or pork located on either side of the animal's backbone. *Variety*, in referring to the play, says, "*Tenderloin* needs to go back to the broiler"; and finally, "They'll need to cook with more gas before *Tenderloin* can be stamped 'rare'."

Now, the play is evidently called *Tenderloin* because it deals with the attempts of a minister back in the 1890's to clean up corruption in a certain district of New York City popularly called the "Tenderloin." This district lay west of Broadway, between 23rd and 42nd Streets. *Merriam-Webster's New International Dictionary* of 1959 says that it was originally the twenty-ninth precinct; but the old *Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia* of 1909 says, "It is included in the nineteenth police precinct." Be that as it may, the district afforded lush opportunities for profit to corrupt policemen who connived in vice and crime there. According to *Merriam-Webster*, one police captain is reported to have said, upon being transferred to the district, that whereas he had been eating just chuck steak, he would now be able to eat tenderloin. From New York City the name *Tenderloin* quickly spread to other cities to denote a district characterized by night life, and especially that life involving vice and lawbreaking conducive to political and police corruption. From being at first capitalized to refer to a definite section of New York City, the word *tenderloin* came to be frequently written without a capital as it was generalized in other cities.

You might be interested in what the big *Oxford English Dictionary* of 1933 has to say about *tenderloin* in the sense in which we are using it here. First of all, the *Oxford* calls it slang, saying that it is "applied to the police district of New York which included the great mass of theatres, hotels, and places of amusement; thence extended to similar districts of other American cities"; and that it is "understood to have reference to the large amount of 'graft' said to be got by the police for protecting illegitimate houses in this district, which rendered it the 'juicy part' of the service."

The earliest available quotation containing this word *tenderloin* thus used is assigned by the *Dictionary of American English* (1944) to *Harper's Magazine* of March, 1878: "His precinct is known as the 'Tenderloin' because of its social characteristics." That seems a mild or euphe-

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A PLACEBO FOR PROLIX PLAGIARY

Upon ~~SEP~~ invitation of my regional College English Association to prepare a discussion of the use of the research paper in Freshman English courses of the South-Central area, I mailed some one hundred copies of a questionnaire to departmental chairmen in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas. It made no claims of scientific sampling in either construction or distribution. Merely because I started on too lavish a scale with my own state and then had to practice greater selectivity with the others, something like half the copies went to Texas colleges and universities. I did, however, make a conscious effort to circularize as many different kinds of institutions as possible with respect to size, affiliation, academic levels and curricula, and composition of student body.

I had always understood that a response of thirty or forty per cent to a questionnaire is a fair-to-high expectation, and so I was astounded to receive seventy-four replies not including seven from colleagues at Rice University whom I added to my distribution list. Since I did not even provide a return envelope, much less a stamped and self-addressed envelope, I could only infer that the question of the research paper is indeed of vital current interest to English departments.

That conclusion was strongly reinforced by the nature of the replies. I had deliberately restricted myself to three simple, neutral questions:

1. Is a research paper of substantial length regularly assigned in the first semester or quarter of Freshman English?
 2. Is a research paper of substantial length regularly assigned in any other semester or quarter of Freshman English?
 3. Do you use or approve the use of "source books" for research papers?
- Below these questions I left a modest space, about an inch and a quarter deep, headed
4. Further comments on the research paper in your program of Freshman English:

A few respondents limited themselves to a decorous "Yes" or "No" after the three specific questions; but almost all squeezed elaborated answers into the limited blank space below the fourth item, or ran them into the margin like scrollwork in manuscripts, or added afterthoughts on the back of the sheet, or attached separate letters and even exhibits in the form of syllabi and instruction sheets. I had the distinct feeling of becoming a lay confessor — or, if that metaphor is blasphemous, a scapegoat with or on whom

the collected sins of the English faculty were being deposited. In some answers I detected a frenzied note, as if the compressed silence of years was bursting into agonized articulation. Others seemed to express the proud resignation of a tragic hero who knows that he must dree his weird without hope, help, or hysterics. I even received lengthy communications from persons to whom I had not sent the questionnaire.

Beginning with the approximately seven-five per cent response which I have already mentioned, almost all my discoveries were surprising. For example, I had supposed that regular assignment of a "research paper of substantial length" would be extremely rare in the first semester, yet ten replies (in percentage, a considerable number) testified to that practice. Again, I should have supposed that the schools not regularly assigning a term paper in either semester would be very small colleges with inadequate library facilities. Quite to the contrary, the fifteen answers of this kind came predominantly from the universities, and the explanations given were often the converse of my starting hypothesis about the availability of library materials. One state university, for instance, reported: "We have over 4,000 freshmen . . . the library is not equipped to handle them in such numbers." A major college abandoned the research paper "a number of years ago because of 1) an intolerable number of Honor Board cases (plagiarism), and 2) excessive wear and tear on newspaper and magazine files in the library."

The answers to my third question showed an almost unanimous awareness of, and an evidently increasing sentiment for, the source book as an instrument of controlled research, as it is called. To be sure, a good many replies were a straight negative, but the majority exhibited at least qualified approval or, if not that, at the very least an interested sniffing of the scent — ranging from "I have feared to try them" through "Not sure; we would like to know what others think of them" to "I can take 'em or leave 'em alone" and "Teacher's choice." Nevertheless, the voice of experience sometimes sounded a gloomier strain: "They are still being used. But there are those of us, having given the controlled materials what we feel is a fair trial, who are convinced that the desired goal is not achieved . . . Several of us feel that the library experience, in every sense and in every detail, is an essential part of the project of writing a research paper. And it is too easy to use the little 'book'

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THE CEA CRITIC

Official Organ of the
College English Assoc., Inc.
Editor: Donald A. Sears
Upsala College
East Orange, N. J.
Published Monthly
September through May

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Associate Member, American Council on
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sociation of America. (Address contribu-
tions and correspondence to Editor, THE CEA CRITIC,
Upsala College, East Orange, N. J.) Published at The
Tribune Publishing Co., Livingston, New Jersey.

Annual subscription, including membership dues, \$4.50.

Second-Class Postage Paid at Livingston, N. J.

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The Embattled Teacher

Before two World Wars and the Great Depression upset the Cosmic Apple-Cart teachers of English led relatively serene lives. They were established in positions of honor and cultural responsibility. In spite of changes in literary taste, in spite of phenomena like the tempestuous freedom of Whitman and the rise of naturalism the professors were not thrown off balance. These were revolutions which still preserved a great deal of the older order. Since 1914, however, the world has become victimized by a series of unparalleled catastrophes which have induced an overwhelming and at times almost paralyz-

ing fear. In this respect our age differs from the Victorian. Arnold, and a number of others voiced despair, but it was profound disgust and gloom engendered by materialism, or godlessness. Nowadays the pessimism is based upon cosmic terror, an appalling sense of the now monstrous shape of evil, revealed only too recently in the mountains of the dead in concentra-
tion camp and bombed city, and in the realizations that for the first time in history massive measures for the corruption of the mind and moral sense have been made a deliberate part of state policy, and that through a supreme paradox, the mind of man, so noble in reason, so infinite in faculties, has, by endless patience and ingenuity devised a weapon which can conceivably destroy the human race.

The effect of this global anxiety-neurosis has put teachers of the humanities squarely on the defensive as never before. Teachers of literature are specially affected because their whole training has directed them to expound a system of permanent values through the representation of human action. What are they to do when on every hand they see a world of increasingly fragmented beliefs?

The first thing they should do, obviously, is not to lose their heads. If they are lost in the forests of the night they should not waste time walking in circles, but should sit down under the shelter of some great tree whose roots go deep into the earth and try to reason out where they are. This means, where should man be, in a world of unparalleled disjunction. In other words, what is a man's hope — and his fate? Is he to be a passive object or an active agent? Ultimately these questions will have to be pursued in terms of the existence of a creative principle in the universe — and of man's relation to that creativity.

Under these terms the teacher is trying to find the true meaning beneath all the kaleidoscopic *varia* of impressions; he is trying, like Arnold's Sophocles, to see life steadily and see it whole. This he should aim to do at all costs. Everywhere around him he sees signs of disintegration. Not without reason is ours called the Atomic Age, for just as the atom has been split with incredible force, so a great deal of the structure of contemporary life seems to be disintegrating under violent fission! The old family of nations is changing with astonishing rapidity; Empires vanish virtually overnight; new nations come into being; the whole of Africa is splitting into vociferous new states. In the political realm the divisions between nations have been raised to a pitch seldom if ever equalled before, by ruthless new political philosophies; in the field of private conduct, traditional morality seems to have suffered an explosion, the ugly results of which can be seen in the juvenile courts, and in the violence and sensationalism of modern popular literature and entertainment.

If he has been well taught the teacher will not be deceived or paralyzed by all this

noise and confusion. He will first and foremost be judicial, by which I mean that he will examine and determine, not simply accept. The doctrine of "Whatever is, is right," whether adopted in desperate resignation, or from a wish to be in the swim, is small help. The revelation of fruitless, rootless experience is not the whole of life, not even in 1961; if it be the reality of a part of it, it is not the fullness of truth.

The teacher of English, therefore, should remember his history. I do not mean dates and battles and the sources of Shakespeare, but the way in which contributions have been made through the centuries of our cultural history, all pointing to an inquiry into what it is to be a man, in the most extensive meaning of the term. When the psalmist, in answer to his query "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" placed him a little lower than the angels and in domination over all things and animals, he stated a belief held almost universally, at least until our own time. Now, the teacher is invited to behold another kind of man, the slave of his world instead of master of it, bedeviled by heredity and environment, increasingly incapable of anything save a kind of blind reaction. Let us not while thus harassed forget the power of man's capabilities. His incapacities have never been so dramatically vivid, but again, let us try to catch the whole human experience, and to use a term out of fashion nowadays, apprehend the nature of moral excellence, and through it, an understanding of aesthetic excellence as well.

In this whole process of gaining historical and ethical perspective the teacher of English would be helped by realizing how essentially simple the whole purpose of college education is (or indeed *any* education, for that matter). At bottom it is simply the acquisition of a means by which

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The Latin Debate

The Withers-Warfel debate over the influence of Latin (*The CEA Critic*, April, 1961) is appealing. An amiable diplomacy or tactical maneuvers so often pass for debate these days that an intellectual combat is a treat.

The palm seems to go to Withers, whose argument, that Latin is a respectable and fairly challenging study, is almost axiomatic. Unless it can be proved that all classroom exercises are more important than Latin, which seems doubtful, why anyone should argue against it is not clear. Withers does not ask for overemphasis, but only that the language be given a break as a fundamental study.

Which debater knows the most Latin is not evident. Along with other knockers of Latin who have studied the language, however, both men express their ideas clearly. Until those never exposed to Latin are proved to have consistently an equal facility in speech and writing, Latin has to be called part of the philologic background. Perhaps Withers chooses to assign too much influence to Latin; but that it was not an influence, and on the whole a good one, is unthinkable.

The "self-generated vendetta" is interesting but out of place. A feud requires two opponents, each sure to think that the other started it. Outwardly the debate is over neither Warfel's book nor structural English.

Underneath the superficial elements, however, these factors enter the debate. Withers speaks for Latin, tradition, and fundamentalism. If a defense of Latin as such is regarded as undue conservatism, a defense of tradition is surely legitimate. The languages of the world have evolved, and with them their literatures and the ideas which, in a cumulative sense that transcends the life of any one man, form our cultural heritage.

We are currently swamped with a peculiar form of linguistic pragmatism. A carefully nurtured new sect of authorities in English would like to make official a principle of corruption of language. They thereby set themselves against all history, indeed a dangerous move. Latin is deleted because few speak Latin. Oral-aural French is acceptable because French is a common language; but basic French is out because who cares today about the niceties of expression or the cultural background written in French. Are these the crystals of refined wisdom of the ages, 1961?

For one vote, I side with Withers. He is fundamental, he is not seeking to set himself against all of history, and he respects our evolution of culture.

If my students, who have "finished" their English, had a year of Latin or of Withers' English rather than a year of English by popularity polls (=pretended justification of errors), we should have no cause to regret.

MAX S. MARSHALL

University of California Medical Center

Paperbound Preview

The shortness of this column does not signify that paperbound publishing activity is diminishing. What is true is that books in the literature and language area have received great attention from paperbound publishers during the past decade, and now the stockpile is running low — except for the standard out-of-copyright titles, mostly novels, which are being proliferated by every publisher. Almost any book (other than a text) that an English teacher might want to use is available in paperback, sometimes in as many as twenty editions. If you know of any neglected good book, inform us and we'll try to start wheels turning. Now publishers are resorting to less remunerative areas — science and technology, religion, world affairs and politics, etc. Books on these subjects dominate the new titles appearing in the latest quarterly issue of *Paperbound Books in Print* — which incidentally, contains over 13,000 titles, very few of which are junk fiction.

But some titles new to paperbounds or just plain new should attract English teachers and prove of use for courses:

- Auchincloss, Louis S. *Edith Wharton*: Univ. of Minnesota Pamphlets.
 Barzun, Jacques. *The House of Intellect*: Harper Torchbook.
 Beck, Warren. *Man in Motion: Faulkner's Trilogy*: Univ. of Wisconsin.
 Bellow, Saul, and Keith Botsford (eds.). *The Noble Savage 4: Meridian*.
 Bowra, C. M. *The Heritage of Symbolism*: Schocken Books.
 Cather, Willa. *The Troll Garden*: New American Library Signet Classic.
 Cranston, Maurice. *Sartre*: Grove Press Evergreen Pilot.
 Cunliffe, Marcus. *The Literature of the United States* (rev. ed.): Penguin.
 Esslin, Martin. *The Theatre of the Absurd*: Doubleday Anchor.
 Ford, Boris (ed.). *The Modern Age (Pelican Guide to English Literature: 7)*: Penguin.
 Grant, Michael. *The World of Rome*: New American Library Mentor.
 Housman, A. E. *Selected Prose*: Cambridge Univ. Press.
 Howard, Leon. *Herman Melville*: Univ. of Minnesota Pamphlets.
 Hughes, Richard. *A High Wind in Jamaica or The Innocent Voyage*: New American Library Signet Classic.
 Ibsen, Hendrik. *Hedda Gabler and Three Other Plays* (tr. by Michael Meyer): Doubleday Anchor.
 Kafka, Franz. *Parables*: Schocken Books.
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 Lewis, Sinclair. *Arrowsmith*: New American Library Signet and Signet Classic.
 ———. *Babbitt*: New American Library Signet and Signet Classic.
 ———. *Main Street*: New American Library Signet and Signet Classic.
 Lucas, F. L. *The Art of Living*: Macmillan Paperback.

Mercier, Vivian, and David H. Green (eds.). *1000 Years of Irish Prose*: Grosset and Dunlap Universal Library.

Miller, Arthur. *View from the Bridge*: Bantam.

Quiller-Couch, Sir Arthur. *The Art of Writing*: Putnam Capricorn Book.

Raleigh, John Henry. *Matthew Arnold and American Culture*: Univ. of California.

Rikhooff, Jean. *The Quixote Anthology*: Grosset and Dunlap Universal Library.

Ross, Danforth R. *The American Short Story*: Univ. of Minnesota.

Shain, Charles E. F. *Scott Fitzgerald*: Univ. of Minnesota Pamphlets.

Spencer, Theodore. *Shakespeare and the Nature of Man*: Macmillan Paperback.

Steinbeck, John. *In Dubious Battle*: Bantam.

Waldock, A. J. A. *Paradise Lost and Its Critics*: Cambridge Univ. Press.

Welland, Dennis. *A. Miller*: Grove Press Evergreen Pilot.

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THE EMBATTLED TEACHER

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one can tell the difference between what is good and what is not. As examinations and courses fade into the past, the student forgets the patterns of "Lycidas" and the verse form of "In Memoriam"; but if he is properly taught, he never forgets the habits of mind which made it possible for him to arrive at judgments about those poems. And these habits should be based upon the recognition that man's imagination is a miraculous thing, and that the mystery of his greatness is far more impressive than the evidence of his depravity.

NATHAN COMFORT STARR

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Toward a Policy on Educational TV¹

The rapid growth of educational television poses many problems for the teaching profession at large and for the English profession as a sizable segment of it. That this growth has hardly begun is indicated by the fact that of the 274 channels set aside for educational broadcasting by the Federal Communications Commission only 57 stations have been activated. By November, five more will be added: Augusta, Maine; Washington, D. C.; Norfolk, Va.; Waycross, Ga.; and Carbondale, Illinois.

Even though educational TV is only at a threshold, the five-year growth since 1955 is already impressive. The total number of hours of educational broadcasting has grown from 340 to over 2,000. The number of courses for credit has increased from 222 to 932. Likewise, closed circuit TV in schools and on campuses has jumped from 77 to 350. We can expect this trend to continue and accelerate in the 1960's. The chances of many of us in English finding ourselves invited, urged, or coerced into television teaching at some time in the next decade are predictably good. Are we ready as individuals? as a profession?

Do we know what is adequate compensation in released time for preparation of a TV course? Do we know who will have the rights to the tapes for rebroadcast? Have we explored the problems of academic freedom as they exist in a public medium? Such questions are being answered for us by administrative decision. They will continue to be answered by administrative decision if we do not debate the issues vigorously and come to some sort of standard.

To this end the report of an AAUP committee is reprinted below. It is a draft of a policy. Your reactions and suggestions are urgently wanted. If you have had some experience with teaching by means of the mass media, why not share your thrills and frustrations. Write us a note, a letter, an article. Let's not abdicate a professional right to establish standards. Television is here. Mike Todd, Jr., has marketed "smellies." And Huxley's "feelies" may be upon us yet. —Ed.

It is imperative that a constructive pattern for relationship between administration, faculty, and students be defined for the use of television in college courses. The following statement relates chiefly to the role of the teaching faculty in the planning and development of such a program.

1. The major responsibility of the teaching faculty in the formulation and decision of policies governing the use of educational television and in the planning and preparation of specific programs should be assured. Though the professor in a televised program should be willing to learn from the television experts, he should, as the educational authority, have final responsibility

for the content and objectives of the program.

2. Freedom of the teacher and student to inquire and to learn the results of inquiry should be fully guaranteed. Special care in this regard must be taken to assure (a) that the selection and presentation of materials and of points of view remain the full responsibility of the teacher and of his academic colleagues, who have the requisite training and perspective needed for these tasks, and (b) that different points of view are fairly presented to give the student the opportunity to see, hear, and judge for himself when controversial issues are involved. Grants, financial sponsorship, and other support should be given and received without commitments or reservations that would in any way limit the inquiries and expressions of teachers and students.

3. Active and responsible participation of the student in his education should be assured. Opportunities beyond the televised program for student initiative and for personal contacts between students and teachers should therefore be provided through such means as regularly scheduled discussion or laboratory periods, facilities for student questions, individual consultation, writing and criticism of papers and examinations, and the availability of collateral reading and illustrative materials.

4. Decisions to award credit for televised courses and to fix standards of eligibility for admission to pursue such courses for credit should be made by the faculty and based on educational rather than economic advantages. Adequate means of appraisal of the students' achievement according to the normal academic standards for credit should be established with recognition that special care and additional evidence may be needed in televised courses to maintain these standards.

5. Adequate faculty time should be provided, and periodic studies made to insure that the time allowed is consonant with competent teaching and a reasonable total load. Drastic reduction of other duties will be necessary during the faculty member's preparation for offering a television course and during at least his first experience in teaching it.

6. Faculty members directly involved in the production of audio-visual tapes and films should be given that control over their continued use necessary to protect students from obsolescent teaching and teachers from damaged reputations. Savings accruing from repeated showings in the same institution and profits from sales and rentals to other institutions should be distributed with due regard for the rights of teachers in the tapes and films, as in printed materials prepared for their students, and for the institution's responsibility to encourage the growth of faculty members as scholars and teachers. A fitting means of encouragement would be the investment of such savings and

profits in provisions for released time in grants for study and publication and in improved library and other research facilities.

7. Continuing research should be conducted to determine the effects of television courses on the students' learning, on the conditions of teaching, and on the academic community in general.

R. F. Arragon (*History*), Reed College, chairman, Committee C, AAUP.

Members: Harold B. Dunkel (*Education*), University of Chicago; Ruth E. Eckert (*Education*), University of Minnesota; Robert B. MacLeod (*Psychology*), Cornell University; Harriet E. O'Shea (*Psychology*), Purdue University; John A. Rademaker (*Sociology and Anthropology*), Willamette University; Kenneth O. Walker (*History*), Goucher College.

¹ A tentative statement under consideration by the American Association of University Professors. Reprinted by permission from the AAUP Bulletin, Summer, 1961.

BEHIND THE WORD

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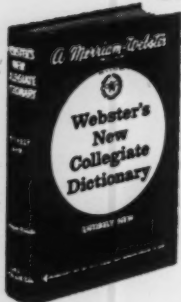
mistic way of stating the case. Then the Boston *Transcript* of October 13, 1900, is quoted thus: "Under Tammany arrangements, new tenderloins have been established on the west side of [New York City] 1." The American Poet Carl Sandburg wrote in his poem entitled "Real Estate News" (1915), referring to Chicago, "The segregated district, the Tenderloin, is here no more; the red lights are gone; the ring of shovels handling scrap iron replaces the banging of pianos and the bawling songs of pimps."

So, then, what's in a name? First, *tenderloin* refers to delicious meat from a choice section of the hog or steer; then it comes to refer to a corrupt section of an American city. Why not give up *tenderloin* and

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A St. Louisan's View of Prufrock

There have been a good many rather ingenious attempts to expound the hidden meanings of T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," but it seems to me that there has been more ingenuity than insight applied to the task.

Interpreters have, in the first place, almost invariably made the fundamental error of ignoring the significance of the name *Prufrock*. During Eliot's early life in St. Louis, *Prufrock* and *Lytton* (I am not quite sure of the spelling of the latter) was the name of a firm dealing in furniture and carpets. The firm — for all I know, Prufrock himself — laid most of the wall-to-wall carpeting trodden by the feet of St. Louis society. Eliot has generally been rather careful in his selection of the proper names he has used in his poems, and I believe this one, too, has a significance, to be explained in more detail later.

Like the name *Prufrock*, the description of evening seems to me to point definitely to St. Louis as the setting of the poem. The evening "spread out against the sky/ Like a patient etherized upon a table" appears to describe rather accurately, if exotically, a good many evenings I remember from my youth in St. Louis. "The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window panes" and the "soot that falls from chimneys" are thoroughly familiar to any St. Louisan whose memory extends as far as the days before the present smoke control laws went into effect.

The reiterated "There will be time" is another characteristic of St. Louis, which was then a rather slow city. There was "Time for you and time for me/ And time yet for a hundred indecisions,/ And for a hundred visions and revisions,/ Before the taking of a toast and tea" and even more time before anything of a really serious

nature could be accomplished. "Do I dare/ Disturb the universe?" — or the slow, methodical ways of the citizens — was the general attitude of the city. Many a good citizen could have measured out his life in coffee spoons.

The poem in its entirety seems to be a satire on St. Louis society and especially upon that part of it which made some pretense to an interest in art, literature, and music.

As a more-or-less literary student at Washington University and the winner of a short-story contest, I attended a fair number of such parties as Eliot is describing in his poem. The women who "come and go/ Talking of Michelangelo" were there. One party I remember adjourned in a body to a museum to look at some new picture on display. I, too, have known "the voices dying with a dying fall/ Beneath the music from a farther room," and I did not "presume" to interrupt anyone's rapturous attention to some new recording of a classic symphony. Such things were not done, although one might slip away and do almost anything he pleased as long as it did not disturb anyone else's concentration on his own interests.

At one party I met the then unknown Tennessee Williams — Tom, I believe, at the time — who said virtually nothing and seemed vaguely unhappy. Originality was not highly prized, and unconventional opinions were not received. It is easy to imagine that Eliot, too, in his youth felt rather out of place in St. Louis's intellectual society.

Prufrock's mysterious question which is never asked is obviously out of place at such a gathering. The "Love Song" of the title suggests a proposal either of honorable marriage or of a mere bit of love making. Neither would be received at such a time and place; it would disturb the order of the universe. The young ladies that I remember meeting at such parties were usually well above the city's average in physical attractiveness, but I do not remember any love scenes — or songs — at any of them. One couple did lie on a bed together to listen to some records, but they could have had a bundling board between them without noticing it, such was their concentration on the music. Both sexes seemed to regard these parties as a special form of recreation in which sex played no real part. Some of my friends who seemed entirely devoted to the artistic life at these parties went elsewhere with other partners and behaved quite differently.

Sometimes a member of the group which attended these parties in my day was looked down upon by a few of the others because of his rather prosaic family connections. One youth with musical ambitions was sometimes twitted about his father's grocery business, into which he was occasionally drafted. Like Prufrock, he might have described himself as "one that will do/ To swell a progress, . . .

Deferential, glad to be of use." Because of groceries, he was not really accepted, just as a Prufrock, standing on one of his family carpets or sitting in a family chair, could never "have squeezed the universe into a ball/ To roll it toward some overwhelming question." Someone would certainly have said, "That is not it at all."

Several ingenious interpretations of the marine imagery in "Prufrock" have been advanced, but again the locality of the poem has been ignored. It is my opinion that Eliot used those images because he was, in effect, saying a not-very-fond farewell to St. Louis and wanted to imply that the best place for a serious mind was as far as possible from that mid-continent city. I do not by any stretch of the imagination equate Eliot with Prufrock, who is merely "an attendant lord," but Eliot did leave St. Louis, and this poem is, I believe, his satirical explanation to the city of his birth why he found it inadequate and unsatisfactory.

MINOR WALLACE MAJOR
California State College (Pa.)

BEHIND THE WORD

(Continued from page 4)

settle for sirloin, also a choice cut?

There is a legend that a certain English king was so fond of loin beef that in a ceremony he knighted it, saying, "I dub thee Sir Loin." Actually, though, the *Sir* is supposed to be spelled s-u-r, a French word meaning 'above', or 'upon'. So *sirloin* is the upper part of the loin, especially as the half-carcase hangs by its hind leg. But by popular etymology the legend seems to have won out — so s-i-r-l-o-i-n, and "So long until — later," as Lowell Thomas might say.

BEHIND THE WORD consists of reprints of talks made over WBZ, Boston, as a special feature of Bob Nelson's PROGRAM P.M. —Ed.

JAMES T. BARRS
Northeastern University

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Letters to the Editor

Sir:

Maxine MacKay (*The CEA Critic*, April 1961) has presented a delightfully literate as well as cogent commentary on one of the thorniest problems in present-day communications. The subject of censorship versus unrestrained freedom of the press is generally discussed in a climate of controversy that gives off more emotional heat than rational light. There are times, even within the not-so-well-as-might-be-lighted halls of academe, when naivete, bias, arrogance, suspicion, and fear combine to obscure the real issues in the controversy raging around the "Obscene Literature" statute.

It was a refreshing and stimulating experience, therefore, to read in *Of Liberty and License* so neatly reasoned an explanation of the proper place of "sex" in literature, set off as it is in the context of an ingeniously turned parable.

Professor Utopus speaks eloquently and to the point for every teacher in literature who, while he believes firmly, even passionately, in freedom of the press, believes, too, that his "first loyalty is . . . to [his] students and to the intellectual and moral things [he] represents to them."

SISTER ANNE GERTRUDE
College of St. Elizabeth

NOTICES OF NOTE

Two publications that recently reached our desk should prove of help to those concerned with the language. The first of these is Robert A. Hall, Jr.'s "Sound and Spelling in English," brought out as a pamphlet by Chilton Company at \$1.00. By clear analysis of the alphabetical basis of the English system of graphemes, Mr. Hall demonstrates that English spelling is

not as chaotic as is often claimed. Further he goes on to lay out a program whereby the teaching of reading and spelling in the elementary schools can be brought into line with the scientific knowledge of modern linguistics. The first half of the pamphlet provides a summary survey of phonemes and graphemes which in its clarity can be used as an introduction to linguistic terms and concepts, quite apart from its special aim of presenting spelling.

A work of larger scope is Joseph Church's *Language and the Discovery of Reality* (Random House, \$4.00). A specialist in child psychology, Mr. Church here brings the problems of language learning under scrutiny. His command of the field, his sane eclecticism, his wit and style make this a valuable book for those interested in language theory. Particularly heartening to professors of literature is Mr. Church's willingness to avoid the extreme of determinism in language implicit in a Whorf and explicit in a Skinner. His theory leaves room for artistic creativity in the handling of language. While brief, his discussions of synesthesia, metaphor, active and passive language, verbal realism, generalization, and definition, all hold matter of import to anyone teaching composition. Throughout, Mr. Church is concerned with "the role of language in effecting the transition from primitive to mature functioning." It is this central role of language that gives the English teaching profession its own centrality in education. A psychologist who has this view of course wins our kudos.

Florida CEA Organizes

The organizational meeting of the Florida Regional CEA was held at Florida Presbyterian College, St. Petersburg, on Saturday, April 22, at the invitation of Professor Howard Carter and Florida Presbyterian College. Representatives attended from the following colleges: Stetson University, Florida Southern, Florida A & M, University of South Florida, University of Tampa, St. Petersburg Junior College, Rollins College, Florida Presbyterian, the Junior College of Broward County, and Jacksonville University.

John Hicks, executive Secretary of the College English Association, opened the informal proceeding with a discussion of functions and purposes of the association. An open forum followed, and the representatives present decided to appoint themselves as a constitutional body *pro tem* in order to take formal organizational action. The motion passed unanimously to go ahead with appropriate steps to form a Florida Regional College English Association. Elected by acclamation as Chairman and Secretary, respectively, were Howard Carter of Florida Presbyterian and Edgar W. Hirshberg of the University of South Florida.

EDGAR W. HIRSHBERG
University of South Florida

NOT IN A KETTLE

by
Ralph Robin
The American University

First, consider the poem. For if you do not consider

The poem you are only writers — I do not mean

Write poetry at once. Give the matter an hour's thought;

Hesitate that long. The poem arises from an impulse.

Shifts, concentrates, concludes.

The process is fourfold by my chalky count —

Whoever cries, "Continuum," will find me a relenter —

And contains, I must warn you, elements of mystery.

If there is a subject that you think of as poetic

Do not write about that subject.

If there is a word that you think of as poetic

Do not write that word.

But do not use, in verse or prose,
The language newspaper reporters write.

The best language of poetry
Is the language of intelligent conversation.

Do not talk about religion unless you are suffering

Or about love unless you are not.

On one hand avoid trees and on the other
Gas stations, which generally are replacing them.

I fear now I speak too negatively.
Write what you will but see that it is lively.

Liveliness is a concept I explained last week.

Poetry has a point, or I, admiring sharpness,

Would not write it myself. The point is variously fingered, but I choose to speak so:

First, there is anatomy,
Which doesn't know physiology.

Second, there is physiology,
Which doesn't know psychology.

Third, there is psychology,
Which doesn't know poetry.

Fourth, there is poetry
(Which doesn't know anatomy but should).

How do you recognize an authentic impulse? By signs.

How do you shift? Along or across.

How do you concentrate? Not in a kettle.

How do you conclude? With a period.

Be syntactical. The best poems
Are written in strong sentences.

Cracked sentences and clumps of words
Furnish breeding places for imprecisions.

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Pennsylvania CEA

The 14th annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Section of the CEA was held on April 15, 1961, in the Commerce and Finance Building at Villanova University. Although the program was an interesting and varied one, and the luncheon the most enjoyable in the memory of veteran members, the attendance at the sessions was a disappointing forty-five persons, the lowest in some time.

At the morning session, Richard Bozorth, University of Pennsylvania, chairman of the meetings and president of the Pennsylvania CEA, introduced the Very Reverend John A. Klekotka, President of Villanova University, who extended the greetings of the University. In his brief address he lamented the inability of many students to discipline themselves, indicated the interest in education at present, the challenges and the changes, and pointed out the danger of overstressing the value of science.

The main speaker at the morning session, Edgar Smith Rose, Haverford College, described the Freshman English program, entitled "Reading and Writing on Human Values," at his institution. The course, now in its eleventh year, was originally financed for three years by a grant from the Carnegie Foundation. It features sections of only twelve students, which are further broken up for one meeting a week into tutorial groups of four students each. At the tutorial meetings, a student's theme is read and criticized by the professor and the other three students in the group.

The themes, which are usually expository, are based on extensive reading in imaginative literature ranging from *Huckleberry Finn* to Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain*. The varied and challenging readings include poetry and drama as well as novels, and are designed to lead the student not only to analyze and interpret the works but also to look inside himself and to consider man and his actions, fate and moral choice, and his vision of the world.

The program is obviously an ideal one for a small college (only 120 freshmen are admitted to Haverford each year) with considerable funds and superior students. However, it would probably be inapplicable at larger institutions and those not blessed with funds to staff the course and with students capable of meeting the requirements.

The second speaker at the morning session, Joseph Lee Brown, chairman of the Modern Language Division of the Ogontz Campus, Pennsylvania State University, showed the other side of the coin. Because of the problems encountered in teaching grammar and composition to the many average and below-average students at his institution, and because of his objection to the terminology in ordinary grammar, he has developed his own method of teaching grammar.

This system differs essentially in his

changes in terminology. Gone are such things as infinitives and participles; instead there are "pronamers," "predicators," "clarifiers," "introducers," and "connectors." Professor Brown concluded his witty presentation by displaying the multicolor charts which he uses to supplement his technique.

At the luncheon, C. K. Tirumalia, University Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania and member of the English Department at Osmania University, Hyderabad, India, spoke on "Graduate Study through Foreign Eyes." In his talk, which led to numerous questions and interesting comments, he compared graduate study in English in his native land with the program in the United States.

During the afternoon session, Henry S. Dyer, Vice-President in charge of the College Board Program, Educational Testing Service, addressed the group on "The Plight of the Humanities."

CEA ANNUAL MEETING

Mark your calendars now for the annual meetings of the CEA in Chicago, Palmer House, December 27-28, 1961.

Public Meeting: Cultural Influences on the Teaching of English: Some Crucial Issues. Seymour Betsky, Ch'm. Panel to be announced. Dec. 27.

Dinner Meeting. William Van O'Connor, Speaker. Dec. 28.

CEA Booth will be #1 on the Exhibit Floor.

He stated the chief causes for the plight as the unwillingness of American society to spend the money necessary to get the qualified teachers needed; the difficulty in recruiting people in the humanities; and the values of the American people who fail to understand the values of the humanities. He lamented the labeling of the basic English course as "Communications"; the fact that one-half of the 90,000 secondary school teachers of English in the U. S. are entirely inadequately prepared; the failure to give English the financial support now given the sciences to subsidize institutes for science teachers; and the lack of curriculum reform in the humanities, the result of the lack of money needed to undertake studies.

Some of the facts Mr. Dyer presented were quite revealing. For example, 10,000 seventh-grade students in New York City schools are reading at the third-grade level; the students taking the College Board Examinations in English at present, a greater number than formerly, are worse than in the past mainly because the pressure of numbers in the public schools makes it impossible to give students the training they need, especially in composition.

He concluded by stating the need for college professors to reorder their courses to make for more effective teaching, to remove the barrier between college faculties

and secondary school teachers, and to be more aware of the admissions problem.

In charge of arrangements at the host institution was Charles W. Bernardin. At the business meeting which followed, Ray L. Armstrong, Lehigh University, was elected president; Joseph Lee Brown, Ogontz Campus, Pennsylvania State University, vice-president; and Ralph S. Graber, Muhlenberg, reelected secretary-treasurer.

Next year's meeting will be held at Pennsylvania State University on April 14, 1962.

RALPH S. GRABER
Muhlenberg College

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A PLACEBO

(Continued from page 1)

and let it go at that."

A whole anthology of sober, humorous, and pathetic "Further comments" could be compiled, of which I offer only a small sampling:

- From a college in Arkansas: "We have more problems with the research paper than with any other part of our program."

- From a venerable college in Louisiana, this challenge: "We would prefer to have our students come to us unspoiled by what passes in high school for the research paper."

- From a university well south of the heart of Texas: "After all, we are not requiring theses of freshman students and we do not expect any very momentous findings."

- From another university in Texas: "I am quite dissatisfied with the research paper as traditionally conceived, but I am at a loss to say how it should be taught."

- From still another: "Although the merits of the research paper cannot be totally discredited, its weaknesses appear to outweigh its merits. Generally, the writing of a research paper is an ordeal for the student. His attitude toward the undertaking is marked by a lack of interest in and curiosity about the subject which he himself has chosen or which the teacher has assigned him. And although he frequently colludes with his classmates or more advanced students, his paper is merely the compilation of poorly organized excerpts of plagiarized material."

- And from the director of Freshman English in a more eastern state university: "Properly taught, carefully prepared, and meticulously graded, they can be very useful training for a freshman. On the other hand, they furnish almost irresistible opportunities for lying, cheating, and plagiarism. They are hell to grade and annually make me wish I were a barber."

Probably I should not attempt to cap the climax with any comment of my own.

If I had unlimited space for exhibits, I would maintain two theses: (1) that Freshmen and Sophomores can be directed to perform genuine research, and (2) that they can be misdirected to produce shoddy goods out of the whole cloth. For the former and happier result, intelligence on one side of the desk must be matched by determination on the other. Success is possible no matter which way the desk is turned, but can be assured only when both of these essential qualities are abundantly present on both sides. Whatever may be concluded positively, I should hope that a remark written on one of my questionnaires might be tacitly accepted as the unanimous resolution of this Association: "We unanimously abhor the 'pseudo-research paper,' entirely derivative and probably dishonest."

J. D. THOMAS
Rice University

Texts and Television

Trends in textbook publishing have been discussed in these columns recently. The following reprint¹ by Jerome Beatty, Jr., highlights certain of these trends and relates to the problem of educational TV raised on page 4 of this issue. —Ed.

"I'll put a bug in your ear," Macmillan's president Bruce Brett told me the other day. "I wonder if the textbook publishers are keeping up with the modern methods of teaching. In the last five years we've seen brush fires all over the country to show what's happening: Dr. Skinner at Harvard with his learning machines, for one, and now Dr. Ivy putting two television-equipped B-24s up in the air and broadcasting lessons to five states. All these projects are getting grants from foundations.

"Shouldn't the textbook publishers get together and acquire a grant? Let's get the top people in the field to study and evaluate the methods of teaching from texts. We must make sure textbooks are being properly written, but I'm afraid most of us are taking them for granted when inside of ten years, I'm convinced we shall be publishing special texts for educational TV or for teaching machines. Today's textbooks and school rooms will be passe. Instead you'll get the best biology teacher in the country and put him on tape to teach a ten-state course. He's an author, of course, and I hope to goodness he's Macmillan's because all the other teachers just won't be writing."

Nowadays textbooks are tested by sale. If a book sells, then it is supposedly satisfactory. That doesn't mean it is the best book, says Mr. Brett; it merely means the teachers like it. If teaching methods change as radically as he foresees, the test of quality can't be applied very well. Mr. Brett thinks it will be necessary to put into the textbooks, sentence by sentence and paragraph by paragraph, all the modern gimmicks of teaching. The trouble is that the publishers don't know what they are.

¹Reprinted from "Trade Winds" in SATURDAY REVIEW, May 14, 1960, by permission of Jerome Beatty, Jr., and SATURDAY REVIEW.

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